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SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID

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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 11 October 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CAMBARI (Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Special Committee, I warmly welcome all those who have accepted our invitation to join us in this solidarity meeting. I have in particular the honour and pleasure to welcome the Honourable David Dinkins, Mayor of the City of New York, a great supporter not only of the United Nations but of the struggle against discrimination and racism, and Mr. Walter Sisulu, Deputy-President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), who have kindly accepted our invitation to join us as special guests at this solemn meeting.

The Day of Solidarity marks the anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1881 (XVIII), calling on the South African régime to release unconditionally all persons imprisoned, interned or subjected to other restrictions for having opposed the obnoxious system of apartheid.

This year's observance provides yet another opportunity to reaffirm the unanimous demand by the international community for the release of all political prisoners and the return of South African political exiles and refugees to their country within the framework of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, which was adopted by consensus in December 1989.

May I now invite participants to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of apartheid and the many courageous freedom fighters and political prisoners.

The participants observed a minute of silence.

The CHAIRMAN: I now have the great honour and privilege to invite a dear friend and valued colleague, His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, President of the General Assembly, to address this solemn meeting.

Mr. SHIHABI (President of the General Assembly): It is a pleasure for me to join the Special Committee against Apartheid and members of the international community in observing this Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners.

The question of apartheid has long been one of the primary concerns of the United Nations. The General Assembly has declared the practices of apartheid as an abhorrent system, whose eradication is long overdue.

The United Nations consensus Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa reaffirmed this commitment of the international community, when it resolved to bring to a speedy end the deplorable situation of the black population in South Africa resulting from the régime's racist policies and practices and replace that system with a government based on the principle of justice and peace.

As we observe this Day, acknowledging as well the progress that has been made recently, it is incumbent on all of us to recognize that the desired goal of freedom and equality for all has not yet been attained. Several issues stand unresolved. The Secretary-General made this clear when he pointedly observed, in his second progress report on the implementation of the Declaration, that there have been delays in taking the requisite measures to create a climate necessary for negotiations "particularly with regard to political prisoners and exiles" (A/45/1052, para. 8).

The release of some political prisoners is certainly a positive step. However, we can hardly overlook the fact that several hundred political prisoners continue to languish in apartheid jails.

The people of South Africa have shown a commitment towards ending apartheid through negotiation. But the continued imprisonment of

(The President of the General Assembly)

anti-apartheid opponents under various guises, the return to violent acts - especially those targeting anti-apartheid leaders - and the reluctance to begin genuine efforts to put in place transitional arrangements - all this is inimical to such an approach and gives cause for renewed concern. The South African authorities have a particular obligation to facilitate the conditions agreed upon in the recent peace accord that would enable all the parties concerned to participate effectively in the process. We, the members of the international community, must continue to lend our moral influence and political support to help bring about this essential climate for negotiations that will lead to a peaceful transformation of the country.

(The President of the General Assembly)

As we observe this Day, we remember all those who have spent and are still spending the best years of their lives in South African prisons because of their opposition to apartheid. We honour men like Nelson Mandela, and Walter Sisulu, who is here with us today. More importantly, we remember those who, like Steven Biko, perished in apartheid prisons. We express the hope that such a fate does not await those who remain today in apartheid jails.

As we mark this important occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa. To this end the international community will remain vigilant, monitor developments in South Africa with the utmost concern and respond, through encouragement, pressure and assistance, as appropriate, with a view to promoting the eradication of apartheid. In this spirit we once again call upon the South African authorities to show good faith by releasing the remaining political prisoners. When that is done, then and only then will the path to a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa be really open.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan of India.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India) (President of the Security Council): Permit me first of all to thank you, Sir, and the members of the Special Committee for inviting me, in my capacity as President of the Security Council, to participate in the observance of the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners.

(The President of the Security Council)

It is with great satisfaction that the members of the Security Council note the presence here today of Mr. Walter Sisulu, Deputy-President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), who for so many years was a political prisoner in South Africa.

On this occasion last year, the President of the Security Council reiterated the Council's commitment to previous Council resolutions on South Africa. The intervening period has been marked by several encouraging and positive developments which constitute significant confidence-building measures, on the one hand, and by other factors, on the other, which continue to give rise to serious concern. The positive developments include the repeal of legislation that has provided the legal foundations of apartheid and the agreement reached between the Government of South Africa and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees regarding the safe and dignified return of the refugees and exiles. On the other hand, the members of the Security Council remain deeply concerned at the continuing violence in South Africa, particularly in the Transvaal and Natal, which has claimed many lives. The members of the Council express the hope that the peace accord which was signed on 14 September 1991 will lead to an early end to the senseless and costly violence.

The members of the Security Council again urge the completion of the Pretoria Minute prisoner-release process and the release of any political prisoners who continue to be detained in the so-called independent homelands, and, in this context, express the hope that a procedure will be found to deal with disputed cases.

(The President of the Security Council)

In conclusion, the members of the Council encourage the Government of South Africa, together with all forces favouring a democratic change, to develop a concerted and positive national programme for the ultimate democratization and restructuring of South Africa along non-racial lines towards a free, united, non-racial and democratic society in which fundamental human rights for all are guaranteed.

The CHAIRMAN: I now have the honour to invite Mr. Vasiliy Safronchuk, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, to read out a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to convey to the Special Committee the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

"This is an appropriate occasion for the international community to reaffirm its total commitment to the complete eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic, non-racial society in South Africa. I have reiterated my own commitment and resolve in this regard in my second report on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid to the current session of the General Assembly.

"Overall, the progress towards the end of apartheid in South Africa, although halting, remains on course. Major apartheid legal structures have been repealed; several measures necessary for a climate for negotiations as well as peace initiatives have been undertaken and South Africa appears to be moving ahead towards the beginning of substantive

(Mr. Safronchuk)

negotiations. In my second progress report on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration, I mentioned that the process in South Africa may be relatively lengthy and even vulnerable. I had in mind the dangers presented by the potential for violence and destabilization generated by extremist groups opposing the democratic transformation of the country, as well as the destabilizing potential of the socio-economic inequalities, which are the heavy legacy of apartheid.

"The United Nations Declaration on Apartheid provides for the release of all political prisoners as one of the indispensable prerequisites for the creation of a climate conducive to negotiations. In response to this call, the Government of South Africa has released, over the past year, more than 1,000 political prisoners. This notwithstanding, there are still some hundreds who, for a variety of reasons, remain in jail in South Africa. I believe this matter could be resolved, possibly through the establishment of mechanisms to deal with disputed cases, allowing for the prompt release of all those who have committed offences for political reasons.

"In regard to other developments, I have been encouraged by the agreement reached between the South African Government and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees regarding the return of political exiles. On the positive side, it appears that the principles envisaged in the United Nations Declaration have generated broad support by those who wish to see a non-racial, democratic South Africa.

(Mr. Safronchuk)

"The broad consensus that human rights must be protected in a democratic South Africa is also encouraging. The signing of the national peace accord on 14 September 1991 by all the major political organizations in South Africa is another welcome development which, with the cooperation of all concerned, should provide a framework to bring an end to political violence in the country. However, over and above all this, it is imperative that the impartiality of the security forces in the maintenance of law and order, for which the Government bears final responsibility, should be scrupulously maintained.

"An end to violence and the release of all political prisoners would contribute to free political activity so essential for the conduct of negotiations for a new constitution. The convening of an all-party forum where transitional arrangements, the mechanism to draw up a new constitution and its basic principles can be negotiated and agreed upon is at the top of the political agenda in South Africa today. This will constitute an essential step to carry the process forward. It is therefore imperative that the unresolved issues, including not least the release of all the remaining political prisoners, be dealt with promptly.

"The international community must intensify its efforts to expedite the implementation of the Declaration. Encouragement, pressure and assistance, as envisaged in the Declaration, would need to be suitably applied as the process unfolds, bearing in mind that the ultimate objective is the establishment of a non-racial democracy in South Africa.

"The United Nations system, in addition to its contribution in connection with the return of exiles, will respond in a concerted manner to requests for assistance, particularly from disadvantaged sectors of

(Mr. Safronchuk)

the society. For my part, I stand ready, when requested by the South Africans themselves and the international community, to help in the promotion of the process and in the provision of assistance during the transitional period and beyond."

The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is the Honourable David Dinkins, Mayor of the City of New York.

Mayor Dinkins has gained widespread recognition and respect as a civil rights leader and politician. His presence here today not only illustrates the great importance he attaches to resolving the issue of apartheid but also testifies to his personal commitment and dedication to the just cause of liberation of the South African people from the yoke of apartheid.

Defying categorization in the traditional political labels, the Mayor is well known for his vision of New York City as a family whose diverse members share their burdens and their blessings and understand that their individual well-being in a complex society depends on the well-being of the community as a whole.

I now have the honour to invite Mayor Dinkins to make a statement.

Mr. DINKINS (Mayor of the City of New York): Mr. Chairman, your efforts on behalf of a free South Africa are a source of deep inspiration to the anti-apartheid community, and I am grateful for your leadership.

May I take this opportunity to apologize in advance for having to leave this meeting before the speaking programme has concluded. While we are pursuing democracy in South Africa, our Haitian community is rallying for democracy in their homeland and I must join them to offer my support. Even as I speak, it is reported that some 5,000 are gathered at the Customs House in lower Manhattan, where I am expected to speak, and their number is growing.

(Mr. Dinkins)

It is an honour for me to participate in this Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners and to join such distinguished speakers as His Excellency Samir Shihabi, President of the General Assembly; Mr. Vasiliy Safronchuk, Under-Secretary General for Political and Security Council Affairs; Mr. Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan, President of the Security Council; my dear friend Mr. Walter Sisulu, President of the African National Congress of South Africa and his bride, Albertina, whom I am delighted to see here; Mr. Jan Eliasson, Chairman of the Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa; Mr. Pheko, representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania; and Ms. Maja Khoury, representative of Palestine - indeed, all the members and guests of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid.

I am grateful not only for this opportunity to join you today but also for the important work you have carried out for the past 29 years in the struggle against apartheid. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Justice is indivisible; injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

Those words could very well serve as the motto of this Committee and, on behalf of eight million lovers of justice who reside in New York City, I thank you and I applaud you for your tireless efforts to bring justice to South Africa.

Another round of applause is in order today. A member of the ANC, Nadine Gordimer, has won the 1991 Nobel Prize in Literature. My congratulations to ANC Deputy-President, Walter Sisulu, on her behalf.

In the same year that Dr. King so eloquently spoke about the indivisibility of justice, another great American, President John F. Kennedy, reminded people throughout the world that the United States stood for the same

(Mr. Dinkins)

principle internationally. He said: "We stand for freedom. That is our conviction for ourselves; that is our only commitment to others."

For as long as the United States has been a world Power, we have done our best to stand up for the cause of justice, wherever it is threatened - from the forests of Argonne in 1918 to the fires of Auschwitz in 1945, along the borders of the Koreas in the 1950s and in Israel and Kuwait just this year.

I am proud that, in keeping with this legacy, the City of New York has figured prominently in the international effort to bring an end to the only legalized system of racism in the world today - South African apartheid.

If today America stands for freedom, South Africa stands for oppression.

The laws and structures of apartheid have enabled five million white South Africans to dominate and repress 30 million black South Africans. Apartheid is one of the world's greatest evils since American slavery - and its legacy promises to be every bit as difficult to erase. But erase it we must. And it is in that hope that the City of New York has continued to apply sanctions even after others have proposed to lift them. Sanctions have brought us within sight of the precious shores of freedom. Now is not the time to abandon ship.

In fact, I believe that sanctions are needed now more than ever before for what other international check or balance can help ensure the good faith participation of the South African Government in the upcoming transfer of power to a new democratic government.

As Mama Sisulu so eloquently remarked at a Gracie Mansion reception just two weeks ago:

(Mr. Dinkins)

"The transition period in any country's history is always the most sensitive and difficult. Sanctions will be a key tool in the constitutional negotiations from beginning to end."

The creation of a constitution is indeed the most critical moment in the life of any nation. The die is cast, and precedents are set that can plague the new nation for centuries to come.

(Mr. Dinkins)

Consider our own example. Let us for one moment imagine what might have happened had international moral and economic pressure been applied to the fledgling United States of America between 1776 and 1787.

Thomas Jefferson's first draft of the Declaration of Independence - that noble document that asserts "that all men are created equal" - contained a denunciation of the slave trade that was later deleted by the Continental Congress. That statement might have been left in.

In 1787, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton argued in favour of the abolition of slavery in the new federal constitution then being developed. Georgia and South Carolina threatened not to join the Union if slavery were prohibited. Had Washington prevailed in that crucial moment, the Constitution of the United States of America would not have treated my ancestors as sub-human. The entire course of United States history would have been changed.

Nat Turner would not have led his bloody uprising in 1831. Dred Scott would not have been returned to his "owner" in 1857. John Brown would not have attacked Harper's Ferry in 1859. Half a million Americans would not have died in the Civil War. There would have been no draft riots in New York City in 1863 in which dozens of African-Americans were lynched and murdered.

Abraham Lincoln would not have been assassinated, nor would Medgar Evers and Dr. Martin Luther King a century later.

The many race riots in our major cities in the twentieth century might never have happened.

Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman might still be alive today, along with the three beautiful little girls who died in the bombing of a Birmingham church in 1963.

(Mr. Dinkins)

Can there be any doubt that the most crucial moments of the international sanctions movement lie not in the recent past but in the immediate future? In the creation of a new State, the cost of flaws is far too great. We must keep the pressure on apartheid until it finds its rightful place in the dustbin of history.

We must measure the current Government of South Africa not by the dark standards of its past behaviour but by the shining standards of freedom. Examined in this bright light, the National Party's proposal for a new government reveals many flaws.

In this proposed new system the power of the executive is diluted by a rotating presidency on the Yugoslavian model. Unfortunately, the failure of a weak executive to address ethnic strife in Yugoslavia can be measured these days in tombstones.

Besides, it is not just the plan the National Party has disclosed that has led people to lose faith in the existing Government: it is also what the National Party has not disclosed.

The secret funding of Inkatha has damaged our trust in the present administration. And the continued detention of hundreds of political prisoners also draws the credibility of the Government into question.

I am here today to express our solidarity with those prisoners and with the people of South Africa in this symbolic gesture. But next month I will be in South Africa to express our solidarity in a substantive and very concrete gesture. I will bring with me many ideas and resources, but I will also bring with me the memory of this Day of Solidarity. Thank you. God bless you and Nkosi sikel' iAfrika.

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to recognize the presence here of Mrs. Sisulu, who is a freedom fighter in her own right. I extend her a hearty welcome.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, Chairman of the Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa.

Mr. ELIASSON (Chairman of the Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa): It is indeed an honour for me as Chairman of the Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa to address this meeting on this Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners. And it is a particular joy and honour for us to see the legendary and greatly respected figures of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Sisulu here today.

Since our meeting here last year, we have witnessed continued positive developments in South Africa. Without going into details, let me underline the latest achievment so far - the signing of the national peace accord. Although primarily aimed at curbing the township violence, the commitments to recognition of democratic principles and to economic and social reconstruction give it a resonance far beyond the issue of violence.

The broadening of the political consensus is a good omen. It is particularly encouraging to note the recent pronouncements by South African authorities and officials of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) indicating that an all-party conference on constitutional matters could soon be convened.

The positive events in South Africa during the past year also include the release of a large number of political prisoners and a marked decrease in the number of detainees. Nevertheless, we must recognize that not all political

(Mr. Eliasson, Chairman, Committee of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa)

prisoners have yet secured their freedom. Independent human rights sources in South Africa estimate that a minimum of 300 persons, and possibly as many as 800, remain in prison. Concern is also expressed that many hundreds of people continue to be put on trial for protesting against repressive laws.

Furthermore, and in spite of the national peace accord, the politically motivated violence continues, as it seems, unabated. This is indeed alarming. We expect the South African Government to live up to its commitments as to political prisoners and to take all measures necessary to come to grips with the violence.

At this juncture in South Africa there is a continuing need for the kind of humanitarian, legal and relief programmes which the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa has funded for many years. The release of political prisoners and the return of thousands of exiles are creating a continuing demand for assistance for reintegration into South African society. At the same time, while people continue to be detained and political trials continue, there is a need for the provision of legal assistance.

During this period of transition in South Africa, the Trust Fund intends to follow its traditional agenda, but at the same time progressively extend its activities to related and slightly new areas. The Committee of Trustees has, for example, indicated that it would lend increasing support to legal actions to address legitimate grievances of victims of apartheid. As participants know, in response to the improving situation in South Africa, on 30 June 1991 the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) transferred

(Mr. Eliasson, Chairman, Committee of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa)

its operations from its base in London to broad-based and impartial organizations inside the country.

The Trust Fund has worked closely with IDAF over the years and I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for all that IDAF has done in this very important humanitarian, legal and relief work.

At the same time, I would like to welcome the recent establishment in Cape Town of the headquarters of the South African Legal Defence Fund (SALDEF), which will take over the legal components of IDAF's work. SALDEF intends to demonstrate through its work that access to justice affirms the abiding value of the rule of law. The Committee of Trustees commends these laudable objectives and stands ready to support SALDEF in its endeavours.

The campaign sustained over decades by the United Nations and other organizations for the release of South African political prisoners is today bearing fruit. The release of a large number of political prisoners over the past 18 months has been particularly encouraging. The international community should, I believe, use today's occasion to take stock of the progress achieved so far, consider the work ahead and press with renewed vigour and determination for the freeing of those remaining political prisoners in South Africa.

(Mr. Eliasson, Chairman, Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa)

Throughout the years, the United Nations has observed this Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners. The issue of political prisoners is an essential element in a genuine constitutional democracy. For wherever people are no longer arrested or imprisoned for their political beliefs, wherever normal political activity is allowed to take place, we can rest assured that freedom and democracy are not far behind. Let us therefore hope that this is the last time we observe this Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners.

The CHAIRMAN: On 22 June 1990 I had the great honour of chairing a meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid in honour of Mr. Nelson Mandela, who was then Deputy President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC). That was an emotional meeting, and for me this is an emotional meeting today, as I have the honour and privilege of welcoming another Deputy President of the ANC, Mr. Walter Sisulu, who is our next speaker.

Mr. Sisulu has been in the forefront of the struggle to bring an end to apartheid in South Africa and to establish in its place racial justice, harmony and equality. His efforts, which began in 1940, have been instrumental in mobilizing the African majority in support of those goals.

It will be recalled that Walter Sisulu and some of his colleagues, among them Nelson Mandela, were sent to prison for their uncompromising opposition to apartheid, as a result of which Mr. Sisulu spent the major part of his

(The Chairman)

adult life in prison. His release two years ago was the result of the heroic resistance of the people of South Africa and the pressure by the international community.

Even though his long years of detention deprived the people of South Africa of his physical presence and leadership, the South African people drew strength from his unswerving commitment to the defeat of apartheid, which gave them strength and support in their struggle against that iniquitous system.

His presence among us today is significant, as it symbolizes the concerted fight for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the moral force of the struggle of the South African people for the establishment of a democratic society in which all the people of South Africa would participate freely in the determination of their destiny.

I know we are anxious to hear from Mr. Sisulu about the current developments inside South Africa, particularly what the United Nations and the international community can do at this stage to facilitate efforts for the speedy elimination of apartheid.

It is a special privilege and honour for us to have you here, Mr. Sisulu. Therefore, on behalf of the Special Committee I salute you and welcome you to this solidarity meeting.

I have the pleasure of inviting Mr. Walter Sisulu, Deputy President of the ANC, to address the meeting.

Mr. SISULU (Deputy President, African National Congress of South Africa (ANC)): In the name of the leadership and the membership of the African National Congress (ANC), I am most pleased to greet all participants.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

Through you, Mr. Chairman, I wish also to address my most profound gratitude to the Special Committee against Apartheid and the United Nations Centre against Apartheid for honouring me with an invitation to speak before this special meeting and to address so august a gathering of distinguished personalities.

Never having had the chance to do so before, I want to congratulate you most sincerely, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the stewardship of the Special Committee against Apartheid. You represent Nigeria's exemplary tradition of active and consistent opposition to apartheid. Your considerable experience in international affairs, both within and outside the walls of academia, as well as your outstanding personal skills and aptitudes, are well known. For all those reasons, you were, in our eyes, a natural choice for the assumption of your truly momentous responsibilities, and we are confident that you will continue to execute them with distinction.

It is no less a source of joy and reassurance to see you, Mr. Mousouris, at the helm of the Centre against Apartheid. Your personal qualities, especially your commitment and your diplomatic skill and experience, are definite assets to the work of the Centre against Apartheid. We are also deeply touched by the symbolism of the fact that you hail from Greece, a country which has contributed one of the most powerful and enduring impulses to the global quest for freedom and democracy.

I would definitely be remiss in the discharge of my mission if I did not also put on record my most sincere appreciation to the Special Committee and to the Centre against Apartheid for the outstanding work they continue to do to inform, mobilize and lead international solidarity with our struggle against apartheid and for a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

Africa. In that regard, only the genuine liberation of our country will suffice as fitting appreciation for the time, efforts, energy and other resources those two bodies continue to devote to our cause.

Standing here before you, I have an acute sense that my presence in your midst is a tribute to the effectiveness of your efforts, as well as an affirmation of the hope that much sooner, rather than later, South Africa will indeed be free. It is doubtful that without your sustained intervention I would be standing before you today rather than continuing to languish behind bars in one of apartheid's dungeons.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

It must be said that in a direct sense we owe it in part to your sustained and principled support for our struggle that our President, Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, and many of my other fellow former political prisoners have gained release; that our national Chairman, Comrade Oliver Reginald Tambo and other political exiles have come back home; that the African National Congress and all other organizations of our people have been either unbanned or derestricted; and that many of the fundamental laws of apartheid have been repealed.

Those are all positive developments for which you must justly share the credit. However, as all here will understand, due to the concrete situation on the ground in our country I have come to the United Nations not to announce the death of apartheid but to alert the world to the fact that the Pretoria regime continues to imperil the agenda for South African liberation. I have also come to strike a note of caution against premature optimism which could unwittingly result in the prolongation of apartheid. Those of us who have returned either from exile or from prison have returned not to freedom but to apartheid. Like that of our other compatriots, our abiding historic challenge remains unaltered: to continue struggling until apartheid is eradicated and a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa is born. Some of our compatriots still remain in jail, and many more are still in exile. Though the African National Congress has been unbanned, it remains the organization of the unfree. As in the years before the African National Congress was banned, we are still completely voteless and our political activities are still not free from repression.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

Though many political prisoners have gained release from apartheid jails, the Pretoria regime, contrary to previous agreements with us, continues to use its own arbitrary and narrow definition of political prisoners, which excludes many patriots convicted for politically motivated offences, including acts of violence against apartheid. According to the Commission on Human Rights, at least 1,000 such individuals remain in apartheid jails with no foreseeable prospect of release. In addition, there are approximately 12 patriots, such as Mthetheleli Mncube and Robert McBride, whom the regime has unilaterally lumped together into what it calls the grey-area category. It maintains that their cases cannot be covered by a general amnesty even though they were convicted for acts committed in the line of service to our national liberation struggle. It insists that each individual be held personally responsible for his or her actions against apartheid.

The Pretoria regime has effectively bottlenecked the indemnification and repatriation of political exiles. While we continue to demand the immediate and unconditional indemnification of all political exiles, the regime persists in refusing to grant such indemnity. Instead, it has only granted selected and limited indemnity covering only the categories of leaving the country illegally and belonging to a banned organization such as the African National Congress and Umkhonto We Sizwe up to 2 February 1990, when such organizations were unbanned. Beyond that, especially in instances where an individual may in any way have been involved in the armed operations of Umkhonto We Sizwe, the regime insists that each case be considered on the basis of its merits as arbitrarily defined by the regime. It also insists that each person so affected be personally answerable for his or her actions. As a result, out of

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

a total political exile population of over 20,000 members of the African National Congress, to cite but one example, only 7,000 have been indemnified, and slightly more than 1,500 of them have been repatriated.

The Public Safety Amendment Act, which empowers the regime to impose a state of emergency, is still intact. Certain sections of the Internal Security Act have been suspended, and the effect has been to shorten the period during which an individual can be held in detention without trial. Otherwise, the Act itself remains on the statute books of the apartheid regime. More than 100 political trials continue, including that of the leaders of the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

As came to light in the middle of July this year, the regime has been using public funds for partisan and politically motivated covert operations. Through its security establishment, it has secretly been funding Inkatha, now called the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). As official correspondence intercepted by the press shows, its objective was to promote the growth of the IFP into an organization capable of upsetting the political influence and strength of the African National Congress.

That was in turn linked to the regime's intention to use the anti-sanctions position of the IFP in order to try to end prematurely the international isolation of apartheid South Africa. It must be recalled that the violence that began in the province of Natal and has since spread to other provinces of our country began largely at the instance of the IFP, the same organization which has gone on to become the most visibly active purveyor of that violence.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

It should not be forgotten that in an overwhelming number of cases the victims of the violence were individuals who were either sympathetic to, or actual members of, the African National Congress. It must also be remembered that, not too long after the violence began, we voiced the suspicion which, strengthened by steadily mounting evidence, grew into a conviction that senior ranking individuals in the regime's security establishment, or the regime itself, had a veiled but directly active hand in the promotion of the violence.

The regime responded with protestations of innocence. Contrary to our formal and informal demands and appeals, it also refused to take decisive action to stop the violence. All this was happening at the very moment that the regime and the African National Congress were beginning to engage each other in preliminary exploratory talks intended to clear the way for a peaceful resolution of the South African conflict.

On the strength of all this we cannot help but draw at least two interrelated and alarming conclusions. At the very moment when the regime ought to have been trying to create the climate necessary for meaningful negotiations, it was undermining the possibility of the emergence of such a climate by directly or indirectly promoting violence. At the very same time that it was professing its commitment to the search for a peaceful solution to the South African conflict, it was actually waging war against those organizations and individuals most committed to peace.

We cannot but question the sincerity and seriousness of the regime's commitment to a negotiated settlement of the conflict in our country. As a matter of practical necessity and to ensure that if we should err we will do so on the side of wisdom, we must assume that apartheid will not die without a

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

fight and that it will take further struggle before a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa becomes a living reality.

It is important to underline the possibility that the regime's professed commitment to necessary change has no greater depth than a public-relations exercise to deceive the international community, and that its real objective is to salvage as much as it can of apartheid, if not to restore it completely.

On 4 September this year, the National Party, at its federal congress, unveiled its constitutional proposals for a future South Africa. As usual, the proposals were disappointing. They turned out to be no more than a euphemistic rehashing of the National Party's ever more thinly disguised refusal to abandon its commitment to the preservation of apartheid by insisting on its perceived need to protect group rights at the expense of democratic majority rule.

More specifically, as indicated in our official statement on the subject, those proposals were an attempt to institutionalize government by coalition. The dominant feature of the circumstances in which those proposals are intended to be translated into reality is one deeply characterized by fundamental, conflicting and mutually exclusive claims. On the one hand, there is white minority racism, determined to survive and to preserve its hold on a virtual monopoly of our country's wealth and the implied economic power. On the other hand, there are the popular forces of the national movement against apartheid and racism and for freedom and democracy, and their non-negotiable demand for a just, equitable and productive redistribution of our country's latent and developed resources - without which apartheid cannot be truly eradicated. In such circumstances, to institutionalize government by coalition is to attempt to reconcile what by definition cannot be reconciled. It is a prescription for an unworkable government.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

Furthermore, the overwhelming thrust of the checks and balances contained in the proposals is so blatently biased against any potential majority political party and so obviously in favour of minority political parties that it effectively stamps the proposals as a formula for minority domination.

In a more practical and immediate sense, that arrangement would give racists the absolute political power to veto popular initiatives against de jure or de facto initiatives against racism and for the economic and social development of the black majority, which has been thoroughly dispossessed and impoverished by apartheid. The proposal is nothing less than a scheme to make the victims of apartheid accomplices in the perpetuation of apartheid through the preservation of its most essential and lasting effects.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

We reject those proposals, which provide additional grounds for our suspicion about the real intentions of the National Party and the Pretoria regime. The Pretoria regime's refusal to allow a full and independent investigation of its covert activities in the wake of the "Inkathagate" exposures has predictably also strengthened suspicions about the anti-democratic agenda of the National Party, to the point where it is now felt by a growing number of our people that engaging the National Party in pre-talks, talks about talks or negotiations for a democratic future is most likely to be futile.

This in turn has sharply underlined the urgent need for the creation of an interim government of national unity to supervise the process of transition away from apartheid and towards the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa.

It would be dishonest to pretend that the Pretoria regime has not taken some important steps towards the creation of the climate necessary for negotiations. However, it would be even more dishonest to claim that those steps amount to the creation of that necessary climate. More to the point is the fact that the regime's covert actions against its political opponents and its subsequent refusal to have those secret activities investigated fully and openly have nullified any progress it may have made towards the creation of the climate necessary for negotiations.

It has also effectively turned the regime itself into the most serious obstacle to a negotiated solution to the South African conflict. The constitutional proposals of the National Party and their virtually explicit rejection of the fundamental principles of majority rule, which is essential to democracy, can only serve to place a stamp on that unfortunate fact.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

Existing international pressures, especially sanctions, against apartheid South Africa were intended to help eradicate apartheid. Apartheid is still in place. In addition, it is actively fighting for survival by trying to subvert and weaken its opponents and by spreading violence. As its recent proposals show, it seems more committed to the reformulation of apartheid than to its abandonment.

Therefore, this is not the time to lift existing pressures, especially sanctions, against apartheid South Africa. To do so would be to encourage the forces of violence and apartheid and to help postpone the advent of freedom and democracy in our country. We must not allow this to happen. In that regard, we are confident that the Special Committee against Apartheid and the Centre against Apartheid will do the right thing, and that whatever they do they will do in consultation with the South African people.

Notwithstanding the obstructionist attitude of Pretoria, we remain soberly aware that the stakes at issue in the South African situation are too high to permit us to fold our arms in frustration. We attach particular urgency to the need for action which would not only arrest and end the violence that currently assails our country, but which would also help place the transition period on firm ground and accelerate it towards the emergence and consolidation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa.

Failure to guarantee that outcome would constitute no less than a prescription for the outbreak in our already troubled country of a civil war of the most frightening dimensions. We have therefore launched and actively kept in motion at least two important initiatives. The first is aimed at ending the violence and isolating the forces that promote it. To that end we

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have continued to involve the widest possible political spread of our people and their various political, civic and religious organizations in the search for peace.

In that regard we have employed dialogues between leaders, bilateral and multilateral meetings between leadership bodies of various specialized and political formations, and summits between the major political organizations. Though in that process we have frequently been able to emerge with agreements which promise the onset of peace, in several cases, especially those involving the IFP, those agreements were broken even before the ink with which they were written had dried.

Despite any number of pitfalls and obstacles, we take pride in the fact that this initiative was crowned by the holding of a convention of the African National Congress, the National Party and the IFP, called by the churches and by interested sectors of the business community. The towering achievement of that convention was a formal agreement among the three principals that violence is detrimental to the real interests of all South Africans, particularly at this stage in the political life of our country. They also took a collective decision therefore to commit themselves to working in cooperation towards ending the violence.

They also agreed to form a joint peace commission. It is to have under its wing five subcommissions charged with the following responsibilities, among others: to draw up a code of conduct for the regime's police and soldiers and a code of conduct for all political organizations and parties; to monitor the implementation of those codes of conduct; to coordinate peace activities among the principals; to review, report on and make recommendations on the situation; and in general to strive to engage the widest possible non-partisan constituency in the search for peace.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

The recent massacre in Thokoza of 18 people and the injury of 16 more as they were returning from the funeral of assassinated civic leader Sam Ntuli is a grim reminder of the gravity of the problem of violence in our country. The fact that the regime, with its vast, highly experienced security forces, has hitherto not apprehended and brought to book the assassins of Ntuli or the perpetrators of the massacre is further cause for alarm. It underlines our long-standing assertion that the regime's seeming inability to bring to book the perpetrators of these and other acts of violence is but a thin disguise for the regime's reluctance to act decisively to end the violence. It also points once more to the complicity of the regime's security forces in the promotion of the violence. It attacks the chances of success of the national peace accord and reinforces suspicions about the regime's real agenda.

F. W. de Klerk's recent speech at Stellenbosch, in which he viciously and emotionally attacked the African National Congress and questioned our credentials for assuming a constructive role in a democratic South Africa was disturbingly reminiscent of the ideological posturing of P. W. Botha in his typical defence of apartheid. It was obviously a red herring calculated to draw attention away from the fact that his regime is doing - ominously - far less than it can and should to stop the violence. It highlights the fact that the regime has indeed become the most significant obstacle to peaceful and meaningful change in South Africa. It sharpens the urgency of the need for an interim government of national unity to supervise the transition process.

The African National Congress remains steadfastly committed to the search for peace. We have also launched, and are actively promoting, an initiative for the creation of a patriotic front of organizations opposed to apartheid and committed to a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

(Mr. Sisulu, ANC)

A wide range of organizations, including the Pan Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Organization, have shown strong interest in this initiative and are involved in campaigning for it. Its objective is to oppose the forces of reaction with a force, based on issues that unite us. Brought together under the umbrella of this Front each member organization will retain its independence and identity.

Our common demand for the election of a constituent assembly mandated to draw up a constitution for a free and democratic South Africa has already been identified and embraced as one such uniting issue. We shall continue to strive to broaden the bases of agreement while seeking to involve more and more parties in the patriotic front. We believe that the oppressed people of South Africa, speaking at last with a coordinated - or, at least, united - voice, stand the best chance of prevailing on behalf of freedom and democracy.

We also urge that the option of violence be avoided and that political means be given priority effort to ensure that democracy triumphs in Haiti, and that under no circumstances should the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of that country be infringed.

We restate our solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people led by the Palestine Liberation Organization for their rights to self-determination and for the establishment of a Palestinian State in their homeland.

I wish once again to thank all of you. We look forward to a free and democratic South Africa.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Mr. Sisulu for his important address. On behalf of the Special Committee I wish to assure him and the people of South

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Africa that the Special Committee will continue to rally all possible and appropriate support for the opponents of apartheid in South Africa until that country is truly free.

The CHAIRMAN: I now invite Mr. Motsoko Pheko, representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, to make a statement.

Mr. PHEKO (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)): I wish to salute Mr. Walter Sisulu, Deputy President of the African National Congress, as well as Mama Sisulu.

It is an honour for me, on behalf of the unconquerable Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), to speak in this majestic forum and to join previous speakers in expressing solidarity with the political prisoners in South Africa and to remember those who died for national liberation and self-determination and brought the struggle to where it is today. It is also a moment of sadness for me, because this occasion brings unpleasant memories to my mind.

Three political prisoners who were my mates in Kurgersdorp Jail, Joshua Motsumi, Thomas Molathlegi and Petrus Motshobe, were executed by the Pretoria regime. Inspiringly, however, the day they were going to be executed they sang one of our freedom songs: "Mabawuyeke umhlaba wethu," which means: "We shall win back our land and our colonially usurped national sovereignty." Other political prisoners - Dr. Naboth Ntshuntsha, Daniel Malinga, Mlungisi Tshazibane and Boneventure Malaza - were tortured to death for their part in the Soweto uprising and PAC-related activities against apartheid and colonialism in our country.

Our late President Zephania Mothopeng, who died at about this time last year, had been sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment for orchestrating the Soweto uprising and organizing PAC underground activities, according to Judge Curlewis, who sentenced him. "The Lion of Azania," as the masses of our people affectionately called him, was released from prison only when one of his lungs had completely collapsed and he could die at any time.

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Jeff Kgalabi Masemola, "The Tiger of Azania," and the first and longest-serving life political prisoner in South Africa this century, died mysteriously only five months after his release from Robben Island. Our women too have served prison sentences. One of them is Nomvo Booi; Nomthandazo Majeke was also imprisoned for harbouring PAC guerrillas.

Prisoners in South Africa have ended not only in jail, but on the gallows at Pretoria. Between 1962 and 1964 alone, our POQO freedom fighters were executed by the regime. As a reult of the Mbashe operation, 17 members of the PAC were hanged on one day alone. On that day, one family lost four sons. Those noble sons of Africa who fought against the scum of apartheid and colonizalism are Maliza Vulindlela, Sandugo Vulindlela, Shilegu Vulindlela and Bonase Vulindelela. Their surname means, "Open the way to freedom."

It is therefore imperative that the supreme sacrifice such gallant sons of Africa have paid to eradicate apartheid and destroy colonialism in our sacred fatherland is not exchanged for political expediency and betrayal.

There is a carefully orchestrated campaign of deception by certain quarters according to which there is substantial change in South Africa that warrants the lifting of sanctions and other measures against the racist colonialist regime. The efforts of the exponents of that campaign are geared not to dismantling apartheid and liberating the victims of apartheid but to rehabilitating apartheid South Africa. The campaign is intended to confuse the prime objective of the Azanian struggle for national liberation and self-determination.

This raises serious doubts about the much-publicized talk of a new world order. A new world order can thrive only on new ideas and attitudes, especially towards people of colour, the Africans, people who have been

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subjected to every form of brutal oppression - slavery, colonialism, ruthless exploitation, devastating psychological damage and abuse of power. A new world order that encourages white minority rule in a new complexion in South Africa is irrelevant to us.

Yes, there is a change in South Africa. Basically, it is a change of tactics, and not of heart. Let me illustrate this point by quoting some statements made by prominent leaders of the apartheid minority regime. Mr. Roelf F. "Pik" Botha, the regime's Foreign Minister, has told his people:

> "The man who washes your car sooner or later wants to own it. The man who polishes the rugby ball wants to play rugby sooner or later. These are the elementary facts that we brought ourselves to accept... We are not handing over, we are improving...the white man's security" (The Irish Times, Supplement, Saturday, May 1990).

Addressing the recent congress of his party in Bloemfontein in September 1991, Mr. F.W. de Klerk said:

> "The National Party has never been asked for a mandate to hand over power to anybody... We are certainly not prepared to exchange one form of domination for another."

We ask Mr. de Klerk: Is there domination in Zimbabwe or Namibia or Botswana? Is there domination in Britain or in the United States of America? Of course, Mr. de Klerk is repeating what he told the minority apartheid Parliament, to which he is accountable, on 17 April 1990. He did not mince his words. The so-called Constitutional Proposals for Participatory Democracy do not contradict anything he has said. Mr. de Klerk stated:

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"There are really only three basic alternatives with which to replace the existing constitutional model... They are partition, simplistic majority rule on the basis of one-man one-vote or power sharing. Majority rule tends naturally to impose unity at the expense of diversity... We believe that minority rule is not suitable for a country like South Africa because it will lead to domination and even suppression of minorities. This applies to a unitary system.

"We are not prepared to destroy the existing rights or allow them to be destroyed. Anyone who believes that we will accept a dispensation in which the quality of existing liberties and rights are dismantled is mistaken. Those who enjoy full political rights at present are not prepared to bow out apologetically from the stage of history.

"On the contrary, a key role awaits them in any dispensation. We shall not throw the freedom and values that have been built over three and a half centuries overboard...

"It is also with this in mind that I shall be going to the negotiating table. And when we have completed the negotiations, the results will be put to the electorate" - namely, the racist minority - "in an election or referendum. Should they say 'yes' to the proposals, Parliament as constituted will implement the proposals in a constitutional manner."

The South African leader has boasted of freedom and values built over three and a half centuries. By that he means the vile system of apartheid and colonialism. The 1973 Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid has declared this odious system of dehumanization a crime against humanity. That Convention has been ratified by several States that do

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not pay lip-service to fundamental freedoms and human rights. The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania wishes to thank all States that have ratified the Convention.

Our answer to Mr. de Klerk's so-called freedom and values is: If we learnt to read and write we have lost our land and our freedoms. If we have acquired a knowledge of and faith in God, we have also seen how His holy name can be taken in vain and used for plunder, deceit and murder. Altogether, we have been losers by the coming of the white man to our country.

Before I run out of time, I must comment on the genocide that is taking place in our country. In 1990 we lost about 10,000 lives. This year, people have again been dying like flies. The insensitivity of some members of the international community to this genocide is disturbing. Would the same attitude be shown to the genocide if the people who are dying on this unacceptable genocidal scale were white? When is genocide genocide? When Europeans are being killed? Is that what the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Suppression of Genocide meant?

The controlled media, with their despicable gutter journalism, have portrayed this genocide as mere "black-on-black violence." Even if it were, it is unacceptable. Africans are colonized in South Africa. They do not rule themselves. They have been under foreign and alien rule ever since they were colonized by Britain. And there is nowhere in the world where people can die on such a scale and the whole thing be blamed on the victims of colonialism and apartheid, while Mr. de Klerk collects many rewards from the regime's traditional backers and its new converts.

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The truth of the matter is that the genocide of Africans by the regime is the implementation of its conspiracy and strategy to reduce the African population while massively recruiting white immigrants, especially from Eastern European countries like Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. This conspiracy was finalized in 1985. But even earlier, the Broederbond, a secret white organization in South Africa, had stated:

"Measures necessary to keep political control of the white man's future in his hands must not disappear ... The numerical factor must be considered."

The plot to reduce the African population is carried out through Buffalo Battalion 32 and mercenaries from Angola, the Koevoets from Namibia, RENAMO elements from Mozambique and the Seol Scouts, originally from Ian Smith's Rhodesia. The Seol Scouts operate mainly in Natal.

The genocide of the Africans is not committed through open physical violence alone. African women are being sterilized. In one clinic, a European nurse boasted that she sterilized 60 African women a week. African men are given drinks that render them impotent.

Askaris suffering from AIDS are also being used by the regime's agents. According to an affidavit by Ronald Desmond Bezuidenhout, members of the underground Civil Cooperation Bureau used Askaris infected with AIDS to spread the deadly virus in Soweto and East Rand townships. Bezuidenhout is a policeman and a member of the counter-insurgency unit based in Vlakplaas. He says:

"I was ordered by Major de Kock to take the infected Askaris to the townships to sleep with black women and spread the virus."

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There is circumstantial evidence that the genocidal violence that has been unleashed against the Africans derives from the 1985 conspiracy. Among other things, in that conspiracy the regime's spokesman is alleged to have said:

"It may be necessary to set up a population boom industry putting up centres where we employ and support fully white young men and women to produce children. We are investigating the merit of speeding up the growth of our population through surrogate mothers."

A committee on methods of encouraging murders among Africans was also to be established:

"Murder cases among blacks should bear very little punishment in order to encourage them. Working through drinks and manufacturing of soft drinks geared to the blacks could promote channels of reducing their population."

Our President, Mr. Clarence Makwetu, pointed out on 14 September 1991 that much of the violence in the townships was perpetrated, not by ordinary people but by faceless professional assassins. President Makwetu criticised the accord for a glaring omission of this fact. He said:

"For this reason we are unable to sign the proposed accord and we rather propose the involvement of the international community in the investigation and monitoring of the situation in the townships to ascertain who is responsible for the violence. The Harmse Commission appointed by Mr. De Klerk has failed dismally to do the job. Nobody was brought to book, and of course Mr. De Klerk wanted the murderous Civil Cooperation Bureau to go scot free."

On the occasion of the accord, President Makwetu reminded us that:

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"The PAC has not been involved in the perpetration of violence, but we are maximally active in peace-related efforts in line with our slogan, 'Peace among the Africans'. We welcome the principle of working for peace in the townships running through the accord, and although we will not sign it, the PAC makes the solemn pledge that we will, as we have done in the past, spare no effort, brave all obstacles and work tirelessly for peace among the Africans."

We advocated the formation of the Patriotic Front as early as 1968. The PAC document on the subject was submitted to the Organization of African Unity. This patriotic idea did not materialize, largely because of the then super-Power and its satellites that interfered in the internal affairs of liberation movements. The PAC has always held that the dispossessed Africans could not negotiate genuinely and create political stability while not united. The PAC therefore rejoices that the formation of the Patriotic Front is now planned to take place on 25 or 27 October in Durban.

Following the formation of the Patriotic Front the PAC subscribes to a pre-constituent assembly conference of the parties to discuss the modalities of setting up or electing a constituent assembly to draw up a new constitution that eradicates apartheid. The PAC favours a transitional authority that involves the international community - such as the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The South African regime is a product of colonialism. It has no sovereignty. It cannot be both player and referee. There is an absolute need for a neutral and impartial chairman or body to be involved.

The PAC wants to see the liberation of Azania consolidating and strengthening Africa, not weakening our continent. The PAC will not evade its

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historic mission to Africa. This is our inescapable political and moral obligation.

The PAC is concerned about the uplifting of the African people economically and socially. With that concern, the PAC is holding a seminar on its economic policy for a liberated Azania from 18 to 24 October in Botswana.

Our President, Mr. Clarence Makwetu, has declared that the PAC is not prepared to rule over poor people. Therefore, land is central to the PAC. Our main slogan is: Izwe Lethu! The PAC is demanding the redistribution of resources, especially the land. At present the Europeans in South Africa control 106,800,000 hectares of land. That means that 13 per cent of the population in our country has 87 per cent of the land, while the overwhelming indigenous African majority has only 13 per cent of the land. Consequently, Africans suffer poverty, underdevelopment, the highest rate of child mortality and the shortest life expectancy. Fifty per cent of our babies die before they reach the age of six. The repeal of the Land Act of 1913 by the De Klerk regime is meaningless while he is keeping the loot for the white minority.

For the PAC to compromise on the redistribution of land that was taken from us at the barrel of the colonial guns is to commit national suicide. Our wars of national resistance under such heroic kings and rulers as Hintsa, Moshoeshoe, Sekhukhuni, Dingane, and many others, were for land and in defence of national sovereignty. Much has been said about the sovereignty of such countries as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which was lost 50 years ago. The sovereignty of the Africans of Azania has been lost for much longer.

There was no country called South Africa before 20 September 1909. These issues are fundamental to the South African situation if the Africans are not to find themselves with an empty egg in the current South African situation. The PAC also supports the Palestinian struggle for an independent State.

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Lastly, the PAC demands the release of all political prisoners. These include four of the Sharpeville Six who were convicted and sentenced to death on the peculiar South African doctrine of common purpose. This also goes for some of the Upington 14. Theresa Ramashamola, the only woman of the Sharpeville Six, was badly assaulted two months ago and had to be hospitalized. Although her defence is purely political and is based on apartheid, Theresa is kept with hardened criminals, for in South Africa, political prisoners have always been treated worse than criminals.

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We demand also the release of Mr. Lathe Mlahleki, who is serving a 42-year prison sentence, and of the Reverend Daniel Nkopodi of the AME Church, who is serving a 39-year prison sentence for giving transport to PAC guerrillas. Both these prisoners are in Pollsmoor Jail, from which Mr. Mandela was released about 20 months ago.

Our people who want to go home and have to get passports from the regime's embassies are subjected to much interrogation. The passports are given on the basis of their political views and are a form of blackmail. Many of our people now feel very strongly that it would be best if they were issued travel documents to return to their country by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The PAC rejects the view that those who have committed the crime of apartheid - a crime against humanity - can now claim the dubious right to confer so-called indemnity on the victims of apartheid. We insist that if the regime means well it must declare a general amnesty that does not subject our people to the indignities of interrogations and categorization. True indemnity, in any case, can be conferred only by the victims of apartheid on the perpetrators of that crime. It is ridiculous that the regime claims such a right.

May I conclude by thanking the United Nations and the entire international community for their support for our noble struggle against apartheid and colonialism and for tenaciously ensuring that the United Nations Declaration of 14 December 1989, which is the only basis for genuine negotiations in South Africa, is not undermined.

Injustices and crimes perpetrated against us must be removed and stopped and our demand for land and sovereignty met. But when our people are offered

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crumbs from the table of the regime and its friends, we shall not retreat; we shall not relent; we shall not equivocate. The blood of our martyrs, from our wars of national resistance against colonialism and external aggression to the present day, is enough to fill the rivers of the Mississippi and the Nile. That blood is crying out for justice to be done to the Africans in Azania, without consideration of kith-and-kin, economic and other interests.

The CHAIRMAN: I now invite Ms. Maha Khoury, representative of Palestine, to make a statement.

Ms. KHOURY (Palestine): It is a great honour for my country, Palestine, to be part of this important meeting on the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners. Today we reach out in solidarity to our brothers and sisters in the prisons of the racist regime of Pretoria. Today we are sending a very important message to all the political prisoners in South Africa, telling them that their long and bitter struggle against racism and apartheid and their struggle for freedom, independence, democracy and equality will not be in vain, that the many countries of the world do hear their cries for freedom and self-determination and are determined to help them in achieving their goals.

We are observing this Day at a time when little progress has been made in this regard. The release of some South African political prisoners is positive; however, it is by no means sufficient. The racist apartheid regime continues to exist and persists in its violations not only of General Assembly resolution 1881 (XVIII), requesting the release of all South African political prisoners, but of all relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions adopted in years past.

(Ms. Khoury, Palestine)

The Palestinian people wish to salute in particular their brothers and sisters the South African political prisoners. We share a common experience. We too are the victims of racism and occupation. Israel, the occupying Power, has managed during the four years of the intifadah to imprison approximately 17,000 political prisoners and to arrest and detain around 95,000 Palestinians - not to mention the torture and physical abuse that takes place during the interrogation process.

Like the people of South Africa, the Palestinian people appeal to the world community to stop this menace and to take concrete action, as they have done in other instances, to bring about justice and freedom for the peoples of South Africa and Palestine.

Apartheid and occupation are illegal and should not be tolerated. Indeed, they should be dismantled.

In conclusion, the Palestine Liberation Organization, on behalf of the Palestinian people, salutes and honours on this Day all the political prisoners of South Africa who have sacrificed their own personal freedom for the freedom of mankind. In particular, we salute the heroes and symbols of resistance, Mr. Nelson Mandela and Mr. Walter Sisulu. We thank them for giving us hope and inspiration.

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to make a statement as Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid.

Today we have gathered together to pay a tribute once again to the political prisoners of South Africa for their sacrifices, to those who, after years of incarceration, have recently been released and to those still remaining in the various jails of the apartheid regime. We are also gathered today not only to show our solidarity with those prisoners but also to

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reiterate our conviction that no South African prisoner whose motivation for his or her acts was political and who acted to oppose the obnoxious apartheid system should remain in prison.

We have listened with great attention to the words of someone who was a former prisoner himself, Mr. Walter Sisulu, now Deputy President of the African National Congress, a living testimony to the heroic resistance against apartheid. We have also listened with great appreciation to the words of Mayor Dinkins, a fighter in his own right against racism and racial discrimination. On behalf of the Special Committee, I wish to thank them for joining us on this very important occasion. I should also like to thank the President of the General Assembly, the representative of our dear Secretary-General, Mr. Safronchuk; the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Gharekhan; and all other speakers for participating in this observance.

This Day provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the past and to look to the future. One lesson of the past is that the struggle for freedom and equity have price tags, which, unfortunately, include loss of life. Our brothers and sisters from South Africa have, over the years, paid this supreme price and, regrettably, this is still going on.

Indeed, it is the resistance shown by the overwhelming majority of South Africans against the obnoxious system of apartheid, along with support from the international community, that has now made it possible to think easily of the future with greater hope. The continuous resistance entails hardships and deprivations, especially from its political prisoners, whose courage we now acknowledge once again and salute.

The dramatic developments that have occurred in South Africa within the past years may not have been thinkable if there had not been men and women

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who, through their endurance of hardship and pain in the jails of the apartheid regime, were willing to rise up and say "Nc" to oppression, "No" to exploitation and "No" to racism. We express our thanks to those who gave their precious lives, thanks to those who sacrificed several years of their lives in pain and deprivation; we thank all those who protested and continue to protest against the obnoxious system. All these efforts and sacrifices have today made it possible for us to start looking with greater optimism to the day when South Africa will become a truly democratic, free, non-racial and non-sexist society.

(The Chairman)

There are grounds for optimism for the future. However, we must be concerned today that one and a half years since the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid was adopted and President De Klerk declared his intention to eradicate apartheid, there are still hundreds of political prisoners in the jails of South Africa, including the homeland of Bophuthatswana. It is unfortunate that while the issue of political exiles, following the agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has taken a positive turn, inadequate consultations and mechanisms and possible narrow political exigencies have prevented the complete resolution of the issue of the release of political prisoners. This is a pity because we have seen progress on other fronts - and I am referring here to the peace agreement signed a month ago, which, despite some disquieting incidents, appears for the time being to be generally respected.

The Special Committee against Apartheid strongly urges the authorities in South Africa to remove all the remaining obstacles to genuine negotiations. Good faith should be demonstrated by all sides so that obstacles may be completely removed from the path of the overall political process towards the peaceful end of apartheid. We do look forward with anticipation to the convening of the All Party Forum, where all the leaders of South Africa would start discussing the constitutional future of their country.

The Secretary-General, in his second progress report on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration, emphasizes that a meeting of all parties should now be at the top of the political agenda within South Africa. However, he also cautions us that the process in South Africa towards the eradication of apartheid might be lengthy and perhaps even vulnerable.

(The Chairman)

This brings me to the issue of the responsibilities of the international community. The Special Committee proposed earlier this year that the international community should follow a two-track approach, namely, pressure on the South African régime until a new constitution is in place, and assistance to the anti-apartheid forces and the disadvantaged sectors of South African society. As the process unfolds inside South Africa, the nature of the necessary international pressure will, of course, have to be adjusted.

Meanwhile, assistance to the democratic forces in South Africa should be another important element of the policy mix that the Special Committee recommends and proposes for the international community. The Special Committee has already taken initiatives regarding the educational needs of South Africans and will soon turn its attention to the socio-economic inequalities in that country, which, as the Secretary-General has underlined, can be an obstacle to negotiations.

In this context all assistance will be needed for the returning political exiles and released political prisoners. On this Day, on behalf of the Special Committee, I wish to call upon the international community to provide effective assistance to those who have been fighting a struggle that is truly our own struggle - that is, the struggle for freedom, the struggle for justice and the struggle for equality.

I should like to close by expressing the wish of all of you that today should be the last time that we observe the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners - that by this time next year all remaining South African prisoners will have been freed unconditionally.

Before adjourning the meeting I should like to announce that on this solemn occasion messages have been received from the following Member States:

(The Chairman)

Barbados, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Netherlands, on behalf of the European Community and its 12 member States, Norway, on behalf of the Nordic countries, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Tunisia, Vanuatu and Venezuela.

Messages have also been received from the Human Rights Commission of South Africa, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's International Democratic Federation and the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America.

If I hear no objection, these messages of solidarity will be published, as usual, as an official document of the Special Committee, taking into account the usual financial implications involved.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We have now come to the end of this solemn meeting in observance of the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners. I should like to thank you all once again for participating in the observance.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.